



# Shakespeare For White Trash: Othello

*Classic literature translated into Modern English by Crad Kilodney*

**October 7, 2010 – Author’s Note:**

*“Shakespeare For White Trash” is a series of condensed rewrites designed to make Shakespeare understandable and enjoyable to those who have little or no knowledge of him. The plots and characters are unchanged, but everything else has been radically restyled. Read my versions and you’ll be a Shakespeare fan forever!*

*These plays are intended to be performed, as well as read.*

**Main characters**

Othello — a noble Moor; a general in the service of Venice

Duke of Venice

Brabantio — a senator

Gratiano — brother of Brabantio

Lodovico — relative of Brabantio

Desdemona — wife of Othello, and daughter of Brabantio

Cassio — Othello’s lieutenant (second in command)

Iago — Othello’s ancient (officer who carries the flag; also known as ensign)

Emilia — wife of Iago

Roderigo — former suitor of Desdemona

Bianca — Cassio’s mistress

Montano — governor of Cyprus

**Gist of the story:** Othello, a general, has just promoted Cassio as his lieutenant, which enrages Iago, who felt he deserved the promotion. While maintaining a facade of honesty and loyalty at all times, Iago plots revenge against both Cassio and Othello. He sets up Cassio to get fired from his new position. Then he makes Othello believe his wife, Desdemona, to whom he has only just been married, has been having an affair with Cassio. Othello believes the lie and strangles Desdemona. When he realizes he has been deceived, he commits suicide out of grief. (Othello is a Moor, which means he is a Muslim of mixed Berber and Arab ancestry and, therefore, dark-skinned. While this circumstance is relevant, Shakespeare never intended the story to be any sort of racial statement. Also, in this period of history, Venice was a regional power, like a city-state, with Mediterranean territories and was resisting encroachment by the Ottoman Empire.)

**Act 1, Scene 1.** *A street in Venice. Iago and Roderigo come in.*

*Roderigo:* Are you telling me that fucking bastard stole my girlfriend? Are you kidding me, man?

*Iago:* I'm not making it up. Why would I make it up?

*Roderigo:* Well, you told me before you hated the Moor's guts.

*Iago:* Yeah, I hate his guts, and for good reason. I wanted that job as lieutenant. I had three personal references — good ones. VIP's who know me. And the son of a bitch ignores them. He says, "*Oh, sorry. Job's taken.*" And who do you think got that job? Michael Cassio, an egghead with no battle experience. He learned war out of books. I learned it on the field of battle — in Rhodes and Cyprus. But he gets promoted over me. What do I get? I get to be his Moorship's ancient. I get to carry his flag.

*Roderigo:* I'd like to carry his noose.

*Iago:* That's the way it is in the army. It's all about who the general likes more. Never mind seniority or ability. So now you understand why I hate that Moor bastard.

*Roderigo:* I'd feel just the same as you, bro.

*Iago:* Let me tell you something. I'm always thinking of what's in my own best interests, you know what I mean? I'm not like a lot of these suckers who waste their lives taking all the boss's shit forever. And what happens to them? They end up old, used up, fucked over, and they've got nothing to show for all their years of being obedient little sheep. That's not going to be my fate. You can bet your ass on that. Now, smart guys, on the other hand — like me — know how to play the game. You have to put on a false face, but always be looking out for yourself. Let the boss think you love him. Never let your ambition show. Rule Number One, Roddy: never let your enemies know you're angry with them. That's why I can't make a fuss about Cassio getting the promotion. I'll just put on a big smile 'cause I'm so happy to be that darkie bastard's ancient.

*Roderigo:* Yeah, darkie bastard is right. Old liver-lips. Fuckin' Moors. And you found out he stole my girlfriend?

*Iago:* Well, actually, she ran off with him. They eloped. But it amounts to the same thing.

*Roderigo:* Then we both have a reason to hate him.

*Iago:* That's right. And we're going to stick it to him. Both of us.

*Roderigo:* How?

*Iago:* Her father, the senator, doesn't know yet. You should go stand in front of his house and tell him the news — and I mean really loud so everyone hears. We'll watch how he reacts. It'll be a hoot.

*Roderigo:* Hey, he lives right over here. Should I just yell at him from down here?

*Iago:* Yeah, do it. It'll be cool.

*Roderigo:* Okay....Hey, Senator Brabantio! Hey, Senator!

*Iago:* Hey, Brabantio! Wake up! You've been robbed! Your daughter's gone!

*(Brabantio appears at a window above.)*

*Brabantio:* Who the fuck is shouting down there!

*Iago:* Hey, Pops, your daughter's gone! She's getting her brains fucked out by a jigaboo! Get your friends together fast, or you'll be bouncing little buckwheats on your knee!

*Brabantio:* Are you fucking crazy?

*Roderigo:* Hey, Pops, it's me — Roderigo!

*Brabantio:* You punk! I thought I told you never to come around here any more! My daughter's not for you!

*Roderigo:* No, no, you don't understand, Senator. I came to tell you something important.

*Iago:* That's right, Senator. Your daughter's getting fucked by a Barbary ape. He's got his ape claws all over her silky white body right now, and he's slobbering all over her with his thick monkey lips.

*Brabantio:* You dirty-mouthed low-life! Who are you?

*Iago:* Hey, I'm just a good citizen who came to tell you that the Moor is fucking your daughter.

*Roderigo:* Of course, maybe you don't mind that your daughter is getting stuffed with black monster cock. Maybe you're a liberal. If that's the case, we're sorry we bothered you. But I thought you ought to know in case you didn't. If you don't believe us, check her bedroom. See if she's there.

*Brabantio:* Oh, fuck! Somebody bring me a candle! Wake up the house! This is worse than a nightmare. *(He leaves the window.)*

*Iago:* I'd better not stick around, bro. I don't want the Moor to know I was here. Even if we make a scandal of him, there's no way he's going to get fired as long as there's trouble in Cyprus. The state needs him too much. Anyway, I gotta get back to him. If you want to look for him later, try the Brass Rail. He likes to hang out there. I'll be there, too. After all, I'm his loyal, trusty ancient, right?

*(Iago leaves. Then Brabantio appears on the street in his nightgown, along with his servants, bearing torches.)*

*Brabantio:* You were right, Roderigo. She's gone. Tell me what you know. Where was she? What did she say? Did they elope?

*Roderigo:* I'm pretty sure. They're probably married by now.

*Brabantio:* He must have used some sort of spell or witchcraft to seduce her. That's the only possible explanation.

*Roderigo:* I've heard of that.

*Brabantio:* Damn. I wish now I'd let her go out with you instead.

*Roderigo:* I think I know where we might find them, if you can round up some muscle.

*Brabantio:* Hell, yes! I have authority. I can get an armed posse together. Roderigo, you've done me a favor. I owe you for this.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 1, Scene 2.** *Othello, Iago, and attendants with torches are in front of the Brass Rail, a pub.*

*Iago:* I would've stuck a knife in the guy if I weren't so damned decent.

*Othello:* It's a good thing you didn't. He's my father-in-law now.

*Iago:* He was really trash-talking you something awful. So did you get married? Because he'll do whatever he can to get the marriage annulled.

*Othello:* Oh, let him bitch. I've served the state very well. And as for Desdemona, I love her. She's the only woman I'd ever marry.

*(Cassio arrives with other officers with torches.)*

*Cassio:* Greetings from the Duke, General. He wants to see you right away.

*Othello:* Wassup? Do you know?

*Cassio:* I think it's something important about Cyprus. A lot of the councillors are already there. The Duke has people out looking for you right now.

*Othello:* Okay, no problem. I just want to step into the pub for a quick drink, and then I'll head off with you to the Duke's. *(He goes inside.)*

*Cassio:* What's with the boss? Is he celebrating something?

*Iago:* You might say he found himself a nice little treasure chest, and he's made forever — assuming he gets to keep it.

*Cassio:* I don't get it.

*Iago:* He got married.

*Cassio:* Married? To who?

*(Othello returns.)*

*Iago:* Ready to go, General?

*Othello:* Sure. Let's go.

*Cassio:* Somebody's coming.

*Iago:* Uh, oh. It's Brabantio. He's gonna be pissed.

*(Brabantio, Roderigo, and officers with torches and weapons arrive.)*

*Brabantio:* There he is! Get him, you guys!

*(Both parties draw swords.)*

*Iago:* Back off! Nobody touches my general!

*Othello:* Whoa! Take it easy! Calm down, fellows! There isn't going to be any fighting here. Senator, what's the problem?

*Brabantio:* Where's my daughter, you bastard? I know you used some kind of black magic on her. That's the only way she'd run off with the likes of you. I'm going to arrest you for witchcraft.

*Othello:* That would be pretty dumb, Senator. The Duke just sent for me, and he probably wants to see you, too. He's in council right now.

*Brabantio:* At this time of night? Well, then, you just come along with me, and we'll see what the Duke has to say about all this.

*(All leave.)*

**Act 1, Scene 3.** *A chamber in the Senate House. The Duke and Senators are seated at a table. Attendants are nearby.*

*Duke:* We have reports that a Turkish fleet is headed for Cyprus.

*(A sailor rushes in.)*

*Sailor:* Message for you, my lord. The Turks are sailing towards Rhodes.

*A Senator:* That can't be. It must be a decoy. The Turks want Cyprus, not Rhodes.

*Duke:* I think you're right about that.

*(A messenger rushes in.)*

*Messenger:* A message for you, my lords. The Turks have joined up with another fleet at Rhodes, and now they're sailing in the direction of Cyprus. The report comes from Signior Montano, the governor of Cyprus.

*Duke:* Well, that clinches it.

*(Brabantio, Othello, Cassio, Iago, Roderigo, and officers come in.)*

*Another Senator:* At last! It's Brabantio and our favorite Moor.

*Duke:* Othello! Am I glad to see you! We've got trouble with the Turks. I've got to send you to Cyprus right away. Brabantio! You're here finally! We needed you, too.

*Brabantio:* And I need you, your Grace. I've got a big problem.

*Duke:* What's that?

*Brabantio:* My daughter's been stolen from me by this general of yours. He used witchcraft on her.

*Duke (to Othello):* Is that true?

*Othello:* I married the girl, that's all. We love each other. There was no witchcraft.

*Brabantio:* My daughter would never love an ugly spook like this. He must have put her under some kind of spell.

*Duke:* Well, Senator, saying it is not the same as proving it. What do you say, Othello?

*Othello:* If you don't believe me, send for her. She's at the Brass Rail. Let her come here and tell you the truth in front of her father.

*Duke:* Okay, let's do that, then.

*Othello:* Iago, you know the place. Go and bring her.

*Iago:* Sure thing. *(He leaves with two or three attendants.)*

*Othello:* And now let me tell you how she and I fell in love. Her father invited me to his house lots of times. I told him about my whole life — all my battles and adventures and hardships, all the dangers, all the places I'd seen, all the strange people. And Desdemona would hang on my every word. She was fascinated. She was moved. That was how we connected. Is that so hard to understand?

*Duke:* No, not at all. You see, Brabantio, you jumped to the wrong conclusion.

*(Desdemona, Iago, and attendants come in.)*

*Brabantio:* I want to hear what my daughter has to say. If I've accused Othello wrongly, well, shame on me. Come here, Desdemona. Who are you more loyal to — me or Othello?

*Desdemona:* Dad, I love you. But now I'm married, and I have to put my husband first, the same way that my mother put you before her father.

*Brabantio:* Well...I guess that settles that. Now you can get on with your serious business, your Grace. Othello, as much as I hate to lose my daughter — especially with no warning at all — I approve of the marriage. I guess it's the right thing. What else can I do?

*Duke:* That's what I want to hear. Give the newlyweds a chance. It's a done deal, so try to think of it as something good.

*Brabantio:* You're right. Okay. Now let's deal with this Turkish business.

*Duke:* Right. Othello, the Turks are making a move on Cyprus. You know Cyprus well, so you're the one who has to go and put out this fire — as much as I hate to separate you from your new bride.

*Othello:* I'm a soldier first, your Grace. I'll go where I'm needed. I'll take the Turks on any time, anywhere. But I want my wife to be well taken care of while I'm gone.

*Duke:* She can stay with her father.

*Brabantio:* No, no.

*Othello:* No, no.

*Desdemona:* Please let me go to Cyprus with my husband, your Grace.

*Othello:* Yes, your Grace. Let her come with me. It's not for my sake, it's for hers. I promise it won't interfere with my duties.

*Duke:* Okay, have it your way. But you've got to ship out tonight. There's no time to lose. Your wife can follow you tomorrow. Pick somebody to escort her.

*Iago:* Iago can escort her. I trust him completely.

*Duke:* Fine with me. Okay, it's late. Let's break it up, gentlemen. *(To Brabantio)* You see? Your new son-in-law is a good guy — not like your typical darkie.

*Brabantio (to Othello):* Keep an eye on her, Othello. She fooled me, and one of these days she may fool you, too.

*Othello (Chuckling):* Oh, Senator!

*(Brabantio leaves with the Duke, Senators, officers, and attendants.)*

*Othello:* Iago, I'm putting Desdemona in your hands. Your wife, Emilia, can be her companion. Bring them at the best time. Come, Desi, we've got an hour before I have to leave. *(Othello and Desdemona leave.)*

*Roderigo:* Iago, I feel like killing myself.

*Iago:* Don't be an ass.

*Roderigo:* I can't live without her.

*Iago:* Bullshit. You'd kill yourself over a woman? Hmf! I'd sooner change places with a baboon.

*Roderigo:* What can I do? I can't help the way I feel. I can't change that.



*Iago:* Dude, listen. It's all in the mind. It's all about will. Why do we have brains? To reason with. Not to let ourselves get whipped around by emotions. Now, you get your head together and be a man. I'm your friend, right? Now, take it from me: this marriage won't last. They did it on the spur of the moment, and it'll break up just as suddenly. These Moors are impulsive. He'll get fed up with her. And she'll realize she made a mistake, too. You just be patient for a while, and you'll have her back.

*Roderigo:* Will you help me with this?

*Iago:* Of course, I'll help you. I hate the Moor, too. There's nothing I'd like better than to see you end up with Desdemona. Don't worry. I can see it all working out for you. Now, try to relax and get a good night's sleep. We'll talk again tomorrow.

*Roderigo:* Thanks, Iago. You're a true friend. *(He leaves.)*

*Iago:* There goes another dupe. I could make a good living off all the suckers in the world. Roderigo is someone I can use against the Moor. I really hate that darkie. I've even heard rumors that he's been fucking my wife. Maybe he has, and maybe he hasn't. I don't know. But if there are rumors, I'm going to assume that they're true. So that's another reason to nail the bastard. The Moor trusts me completely. That's the big advantage I have over him. So the idea now is to get Cassio and the Moor both, and to do it in such a way that I look like a fucking saint....Hmm....Let's see....I've got it. I'll tell Othello that Cassio has been getting too familiar with Desdemona. That's plausible. Cassio's a handsome guy. Women go for him. Othello would believe anything I told him. I'd have to play him the right way, but I can do that. For a guy who's been in wars, he can be pretty naive about people.

*(Iago leaves.)*

**Act 2, Scene 1.** *A seaport in Cyprus. An open place near the harbor. Montano, the Governor of Cyprus, is with two Gentlemen.*

*Montano:* What a hell of a storm that was. It was bad enough on land. I can't imagine what it was like at sea.

*First Gentleman:* It's still rough out there. I can't even see a sail.

*Second Gentleman:* I wonder if there's anything left of the Turkish fleet.

*(A third Gentleman arrives.)*

*Third Gentleman:* Guess what. The Turkish fleet has turned back. The storm was too much for them.

*Montano:* How did you find out?

*Third Gentleman:* We heard it from a ship that just arrived from Venice. Michael Cassio, Othello's lieutenant, was on it. Othello's still at sea, but he should be here soon.

*Montano:* I hope so.

*Third Gentleman:* Cassio said it was pretty bad out there. He's worried about Othello. Their ships got separated.

*(Cassio arrives.)*

*Cassio:* There's no sign of Othello's ship yet.

*Montano:* I hope he's got a rugged ship.

*Cassio:* Yeah, it's a good ship. And he's got a good pilot. Let's hope he's okay.

*(A messenger arrives.)*

*Messenger:* There's a sail on the horizon!

*Cassio (to Second Gentleman):* Maybe that's him. Want to go check?

*Second Gentleman:* Sure. *(He leaves.)*

*Montano:* Tell me, Lieutenant. Is your general married?

*Cassio:* Oh, yes. A lovely lady — Senator Brabantio's daughter, Desdemona.

*(Second Gentleman returns.)*

*Second Gentleman:* It's Iago's ship. The general's ancient.

*Cassio:* Desdemona's on that ship. You see? She's so beautiful, even the elements calmed down to let her pass safely. Oh! I think I see them coming.

*(Desdemona, Iago, Roderigo, and Emilia, with attendants, come in.)*

*Cassio:* Ah, Desdemona! Now all the men of Cyprus have a proper goddess to worship!

*Desdemona:* Oh, you flatterer, ha, ha! So where is my husband?

*Cassio:* We're still waiting for him.

*Desdemona:* Oh, my goodness! He's not here yet? You didn't see his ship?

*Cassio:* We got separated.

*(Distant cries of "A sail! A sail!" A shot is heard.)*

*Second Gentleman:* That's a signal shot. It's a friendly ship.

*Cassio:* Would you check it out? *(Second Gentleman leaves.)* Iago, good to see you! You won't mind if I give your wife a kiss. *(He kisses Emilia.)* You look great, Emilia.

*Iago:* She's on her best behavior now, ha, ha. Believe me, you don't want to see her other side.

*Emilia:* Don't listen to him. He loves to tease me.

*Desdemona:* Oh, Iago, what a thing to say! What does a woman have to do to earn your praise?

*Iago:* Keep the kids quiet and make sure there's plenty of beer in the cooler.

*Desdemona:* Oh, you cynic. Don't take him seriously, Emilia. What do you think, Cassio?

*Cassio:* Well, he has a point, although I think you'll appreciate him more as a soldier than a philosopher. *(He takes Desdemona's hand in a friendly way.)*

*Iago (Aside):* Oh, catch that little move? Holding her hand. Smiling at her. That's right. Go on. The fly has found his way to the web. *(Cassio kisses Desdemona's hand.)* Oh, isn't he gallant? Isn't he suave? *(A trumpet sounds.)* That's the general! That's his trumpet!

*(Othello arrives with his attendants.)*

*Othello:* Desi, darling!

*Desdemona:* Dear Othello! *(They kiss.)*

*Iago (Aside):* Happy now....Not so happy later.

*Othello:* It's all good news, my friends. No more threat from the Turks. No war. Let's head to the castle. Iago, go unload my baggage and bring the captain to the citadel. I'm going to break out the good stuff for him. He deserves it after bringing me through that storm.

*(All leave except Iago and Roderigo.)*

*Iago:* Listen, Roddy. Desdemona's in love with Cassio.

*Roderigo:* No way.

*Iago:* Oh, yes. She has a wandering eye. She likes a good-looking man. The Moor is nothing to look at. She's going to lose interest in him pretty soon. But Cassio's her type. Of course, he's totally superficial. He just wants to get his rocks off. He's only out to use her. But she doesn't realize it.

*Desdemona:* She wouldn't fall for a guy like that.

*Iago:* Sure, she would. She's mistake-prone when it comes to men. She married the Moor, didn't she? That proves it. Didn't you see the way she let Cassio hold her hand?

*Roderigo:* Oh, that was nothing.

*Iago:* Don't kid yourself. I could see what he was thinking. It was written all over him. He wanted to fuck her so bad. And she was falling for him. Now listen. We're going to get him out of the way tonight, before he goes on guard duty. He doesn't really know you. I'll give you a signal, and you'll do something to provoke him. Let him hit you. Then he'll be in trouble.

*Roderigo:* Well...okay...I'll try, assuming I have the opportunity.

*Iago:* You will. Trust me. Meet me at the citadel. I have to go unload the general's stuff now. I'll see you later.

*Roderigo:* Okay, later, bro. *(Roderigo leaves.)*

*Iago:* Cassio obviously likes Desdemona, and she likes him, too. I'll make the Moor think she loves Cassio. He'll be jealous as hell. When Roddy provokes Cassio, I'll report it to the Moor in such a way

that it looks like Cassio's fault. The Moor will be so grateful to me. After that...well, things should unfold the way I want them to.

*(He leaves.)*

**Act 2, Scene 2.** *Before Othello's castle in Cyprus. Othello's Herald comes in and faces an assembled crowd. The Herald reads a proclamation.*

*Herald:* Hear ye! Hear ye!...Whatever...By order of Othello, our general, there shall be a celebration all over the island to celebrate the end of the Turkish threat, as well as the general's recent marriage. All bars can stay open all night. There shall be bonfires, singing, dancing, feasting, general merriment, and a wet t-shirt contest. Noise by-laws will not be enforced. Traffic will be diverted away from the downtown core. School is out for tomorrow. Banks will be closed. Government services will be closed, including garbage collection and mail delivery. The stock exchange will be closed. Tomorrow will not be a settlement day for stock and option trades. God bless the island of Cyprus and our noble general, Othello. That is all.

*(General cheering as the Herald leaves.)*

**Act 2, Scene 3.** *Within the castle. Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and attendants come in.*

*Othello:* Michael, you're in charge of the guard tonight.

*Cassio:* Iago has instructions what to do, but I'll keep an eye on things.

*Othello:* He's a good man. Come and see me early tomorrow. Now, Desi, let's try out the water bed.— Good night.

*(All leave except Cassio. Then Iago comes in.)*

*Cassio:* Hey, bro. We're on the watch tonight.

*Iago:* It's still early. It's not even ten. The general's going to bed early for a long night of Moorish fucking. He's going to give his wife some black love, right? *(Nudges Cassio in the ribs.)* She's going to ride on that big horse cock of his. Eh? Eh? *(Another nudge.)*

*Cassio:* She's quite lovely.

*Iago:* I'll bet her pussy could swallow the biggest sausage in Venice. Eh? Eh? *(Nudge.)*

*Cassio:* I think she's sweet and delicate.

*Iago:* She just oozes sex waves, doncha think? And her lips were made for sucking. Eh? Eh? *(Nudge.)*

*Cassio:* She's attractive but modest as well.

*Iago:* Doesn't she just make you want to rip her clothes off and slip her the pork sword while you stuff her tits in your mouth? Eh? Eh? *(Nudge.)*

*Cassio:* I would say she is without a flaw.

*Iago:* Yeah....Right....Okay, well, good fucking to them both. Hey, I've got a big bottle of wine, and there are some local guys I want you to meet. We can drink to the good health of our favorite Moor.

*Cassio:* I really shouldn't. Wine goes to my head.

*Iago:* Aw, come on. One cup won't hurt. Just to be social. You'll like these guys. They're cool.

*Cassio:* I had a cup earlier, and I'm still feeling it. I'd better not have any more.

*Iago:* But we're celebrating. And the guys want us to join them.

*Cassio:* Where are they?

*Iago:* They're in the foyer. Go on, bring them up.

*Cassio:* Oh, well...if you insist. *(Cassio leaves.)*

*Iago:* All I have to do is ply him with a little more wine, and he'll be on a hair-trigger. Roderigo is already drunk, and he's got Desdemona on the brain. He'll be waiting for my signal. The Cyprus guys are already a bit drunk, too. The idea is to get Cassio to offend the Cyprus guys so he gets fired.

*(Cassio, Montano, and Gentlemen come in, followed by a servant with wine.)*

*Cassio:* Oh, man, they're already making me drink wine.

*Iago:* Hey, it's a party! Have a good time! Let's drink!

*Cassio:* To the health of our general.

*Montano:* I'll drink to that.

*Iago (Sings or recites, with the accent of Norfolk on the second syllable — i.e., nor-FOLK):*

Here's to the good girls of Norfolk,

Let's hear it for Norfolk,

They don't drink, they don't smoke,

Norfolk, Norfolk, Norfolk!

*Montano:* Rock on, dude!

*Cassio:* That's my limit, guys. Not another drop. Duty calls, and I have to go. *(He leaves.)*

*Iago:* I think the lieutenant has had too much to drink. Othello had better not catch him like that.

*Montano:* Oh? Does he get this way a lot?

*Iago:* Way too much.

*Montano:* In that case, you'd be doing the general a favor to tell him.

*(Roderigo comes in.)*

*Iago (Aside to Roderigo):* There goes Cassio. Go after him. *(Roderigo leaves.)*

*Montano:* I say, don't you think you should tell the general about the lieutenant's drinking problem?

*Iago:* I just couldn't do that to a friend. I'd rather help him overcome his degenerate vice.

*(Shouts of "Help! Help!" Cassio comes in, chasing Roderigo.)*

*Cassio:* You piece of shit!

*Montano:* Lieutenant! What's the matter?

*Cassio:* This asshole called me a fairy! I'll punch his lights out!

*Roderigo:* You wouldn't dare!

*Cassio:* Oh, wouldn't I! *(Punches Roderigo.)*

*Montano:* Stop! *(Grabs Cassio's arm.)*

*Cassio:* Let go or I'll punch you, too!

*Montano:* You're drunk!

*Cassio:* Drunk, am I? Fuck you! *(Punches Montano, and they fight.)*

*Iago (Aside to Roderigo):* Good job! Now run out and shout that there's a mutiny. *(Roderigo runs out. Shouts of "Mutiny! Mutiny!")* Stop this fighting! Stop it, both of you! *(To others)* Help me pull these guys apart.

*(The combatants are separated as Othello comes in with attendants.)*

*Othello:* What the hell's going on here?

*Montano:* Your lieutenant punched me!

*Othello:* What started this? This is a disgrace! Iago, what happened here?

*Iago:* I really don't know. Everyone was having a good time. And then somebody said something — I don't know what — and then a fight broke out. The whole thing is stupid.

*Othello:* Michael, I can't believe this. Can you explain it?

*Cassio:* No....Sorry....I just can't speak.

*Othello:* Montano. Really. A man of your position. To get into a fight like some sort of white trash.

*Montano:* General, I didn't do anything wrong to anybody, and Iago will tell you so.

*Othello:* Iago, who started it?

*Iago:* Well...I...I really hate to tell you...I hate to hurt a fellow officer like Michael Cassio, who is my friend. But he came in chasing after this fellow, and he hit him. And when Signior Montano tried to

intervene, Michael hit him, too. Probably the other fellow said something to offend Cassio. I don't know.

*Othello:* Well, it's very noble of you to stand by your friend, but I can't tolerate this kind of misconduct among my officers. Michael, you're no longer my lieutenant. I'm very disappointed in you. Montano, my attendants will take care of that lump on your head.—Guys, take the governor to the doctor.  
(*Montano is escorted out by some attendants. Then Desdemona comes in.*)

*Desdemona:* I heard a commotion. What happened?

*Othello:* It's nothing, my dear. Just a very small quarrel, that's all. I'll tell you later. (*To Iago*) Keep a lid on this, okay? Anybody asks, just make up some bullshit.

(*All leave, except Iago and Cassio.*)

*Iago:* Are you hurt, Michael?

*Cassio:* Just my reputation.

*Iago:* Aw, don't worry. The general only fired you for the sake of appearances because you hit the governor. He still likes you. If you talk to him, I think he'll reinstate you.

*Cassio:* I can't do that. I feel too humiliated.

*Iago:* Aw, buck up. It was just a little mistake on your part. It'll all blow over. Look, I have an idea. Why don't you ask Desdemona to put in a good word for you to the general? She likes you. She'd do that much for you.

*Cassio:* Well, I guess that's not a bad idea. Okay, I'll go see her first thing in the morning.

*Iago:* Atta boy! That's the spirit! Now, why don't you hit the sack and let me take care of the watch for you.

*Cassio:* You're a real pal, Iago. I appreciate it. Thanks. (*He leaves.*)

*Iago:* Okay, the wheels are turning. My wife, Emilia, is Desdemona's companion. So now I get Emilia to prime Desdemona to receive Cassio in a nice, friendly way. After that, I make Othello believe that Cassio and Desdemona are more than just friends. Gee, I so much enjoy manipulating people!

(*He leaves.*)

**Act 3, Scene 1.** *This scene is deleted.*

**Act 3, Scene 2.** *This scene is deleted.*

**Act 3, Scene 3.** *The garden of the castle. Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia come in.*

*Desdemona:* I'll do everything I can for you, Cassio.

*Emilia:* Oh, I hope you can. It means as much to Iago as it does to Cassio.

*Desdemona:* Iago's so good, isn't he? Don't worry, Cassio. Everything will be okay again between you and my husband. Of course, you did offend the governor, so it won't be so easy. But I'll keep after him until he gives in.

*Emilia:* Oh, I think I see him coming.

*Cassio:* I'd better leave. I'm still too embarrassed to face him.

*(Cassio leaves. Then Othello and Iago come in.)*

*Iago:* Oh, well, well!

*Othello:* What?

*Iago:* Oh, nothing.

*Othello:* Was that Cassio I just saw leaving?

*Iago:* Huh? Cassio? Naw, it couldn't be. Cassio wouldn't slink away with such a guilty look on his face just because he saw you coming.

*Othello:* Gee, that's funny. I could've sworn—

*Desdemona:* Oh, here you are, my dear. I was just talking with your lieutenant. He feel so bad about being fired. He thinks the world of you. I'd be so happy if you've give him another chance.

*Othello:* Was that him I just saw leaving?

*Desdemona:* Yes. He's still embarrassed, the poor fellow. You should call him back.

*Othello:* Not now. Maybe later.

*Desdemona:* How about inviting him to supper?

*Othello:* Not tonight. I have a meeting with my staff at the citadel.

*Desdemona:* Well, then, how about tomorrow night? Or Tuesday, or Wednesday? You can't be that busy.

*Othello:* Don't bug me about it. If he wants to talk to me, let him come and see me.

*Desdemona:* All right, then. Come on, Emilia. Let's go play some euchre.

*(Desdemona and Emilia leave.)*

*Othello:* That woman! When she gets her mind set on something, she doesn't let go. And she usually gets what she wants from me.

*Iago:* Say, General, when you were courting Desdemona, did Cassio know?

*Othello:* Of course. He was in my confidence the whole time.

*Iago:* Ah. Really? And I didn't think he knew her at all.



*Othello:* What are you driving at?

*Iago:* Well...General...I really shouldn't be saying anything. I don't want you to be hurt.

*Othello:* Wait a minute now. A disloyal rat would drop insinuations because that's the sort of thing a rat does. But you're not like that. You're always honest and loyal to me. If there's something I ought to know, spit it out.

*Iago:* I'm afraid if I told you, you'd be jealous as hell.

*Othello:* You mean about Desdemona and other men? Bah! Come on! She's the outgoing type, that's all.

*Iago:* Of course, I don't have any proof of anything, but I'd keep an eye on your wife and Cassio if I were you. After all, she deceived her father before she married you. He was so much in the dark he thought you must have used witchcraft on her. I'm sorry. I'm only telling you this out of loyalty.

*Othello:* I'd never question your loyalty.

*Iago:* I hope I'm wrong about all this. You know Cassio's my friend. I'd sooner have my arms and legs ripped off than slander him, even by accident.

*Othello:* I don't think Desdemona's messing around with Cassio or anyone else.

*Iago:* Let's hope not.

*Othello:* On the other hand, she did marry outside of her own people when she married me, if you know what I mean.

*Iago:* I certainly do. And maybe she's having second thoughts about that. After all, Cassio's a handsome guy, and he's one of her people.

*Othello:* Look, let's just drop it, okay? If you find out anything specific, let me know. And that includes anything you find out from your wife. Leave me be for now.

*Iago:* Yes, General. Goodbye. *(Iago leaves.)*

*Othello:* Why did I marry that woman? Iago knows more than he's telling me.

*(Iago returns.)*

*Iago:* Just another thought, General. Put Cassio off for a while and see what happens. See how hard your wife pushes you to rehire him. That may tell you something. In the meantime, I'll assume for everybody's sake that it's just my over-active imagination.

*Othello:* Yes, yes. I'll do what you suggest. Thanks. *(Iago leaves.)* What an honest guy! And he really knows people. If Desdemona has been messing around, I'm through with her. Fucking hell! Marriage can be a bigger curse for men of power and responsibility than for ordinary people.

*(Desdemona and Emilia come in.)*

*Desdemona:* Your dinner guests are waiting for you.

*Othello:* Sorry, I forgot. I have a headache. Right there. *(Points to forehead.)*

*Desdemona:* That's from not getting enough sleep. Let me wrap my handkerchief around it.

*Othello:* Forget that. I'll take a pill. *(Handkerchief drops to the floor.)* Let's go.

*(Othello and Desdemona leave.)*

*Emilia:* Oh! I'd better save this. *(Picks up handkerchief.)* It was the first gift she ever got from Othello. Iago keeps begging me to steal it. I don't know why. Maybe he likes the design. I'll have a duplicate made for him.

*(Iago comes in.)*

*Emilia:* Look what I have for you. Desdemona's handkerchief. She dropped it, and I picked it up.

*Iago:* Oh! Fabulous! Good work! Give it to me!

*Emilia:* What do you want it for?

*Iago:* Never mind. *(He snatches it.)*

*Emilia:* Hey! She's going to want that back!

*Iago:* You never saw it, understand? I need it. Now scram. *(Emilia leaves.)* I've got plans for this little item. I'll drop it in Cassio's room, and he'll conveniently find it. He won't realize how incriminating it is. This will prove to Othello that Cassio and Desdemona have been having an affair. In fact, here comes the big man now.

*(Othello comes in.)*

*Othello:* Hey, you know, I was a happily married guy until you put the idea in my head that my wife might be messing around on me. And you're going to damned sorry about that if you don't have some proof to back it up.

*Iago:* Oh! General! Is this what I get for being so loyal and honest? Next time I'll keep my mouth shut, no matter what goes on behind your back.

*Othello:* Oh, hell, I didn't mean it like that. It's just that you've got me upset about it, and I need some proof.

*Iago:* I'm sorry that you're upset. What would it take to convince you? Do you have to catch her in the act?

*Othello:* Oh, goddamn!

*Iago:* Because that's not likely to happen, right? But if you want circumstantial evidence — and I mean clear-cut, obvious circumstantial evidence — I have that.

*Othello:* Okay, tell me.

*Iago:* Well, the other night I was staying over at Cassio's, and we had to share the same bed — which of course is perfectly normal for soldiers, right? Okay, so it turns out the guy talks in his sleep. And what do you think he was saying? He was saying, "*Oh, Desdemona, I love you so much. I want to fuck you again.*" And he said, "*We can't let your husband find out.*" And he said, "*Get on top and hump my face so I can eat you from underneath.*"

*Othello:* Oh, fucking hell!

*Iago:* Of course, he was only dreaming.

*Othello:* Yeah, dreaming! But dreaming of what? Of something that happened! I'll tear that bitch to pieces!

*Iago:* No, no, don't do that. You can't be a hundred percent sure until you see something with your own eyes. Say, doesn't your wife carry a handkerchief with a strawberry design on it?

*Othello:* Yes. That was the first gift I ever gave her.

*Iago:* Really! I didn't know that. Jeez, I could swear I saw Cassio wipe his face with it today.

*Othello:* Oh, shit, that settles it! Now I see it all! I'll kill that son of a bitch! I'll kill them both! *(He covers his face, overcome with emotion. Iago puts a hand on his shoulder in consolation.)*

*Iago:* I feel your pain, General. You've been so wronged. Tell me what you want me to do, and I'll do it.

*Othello:* You're my best friend, Iago. You'll do me one favor, won't you? You'll kill Cassio. I want that bastard dead within three days.

*Iago:* I'll do it. But let your wife live.

*Othello:* That bitch! I'll take care of her in my own way. Iago, as of now you're my lieutenant.

*Iago:* You won't be sorry, General. I'll be the best lieutenant you could ever have.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 3, Scene 4.** *Before the castle. Desdemona and Emilia come in.*

*Desdemona:* Where the hell did I lose that handkerchief?

*Emilia:* I don't know.

*Desdemona:* Damn! That's the last thing I'd want to lose. You know, it's a good think my husband isn't the jealous type, or he might get the wrong idea.

*(Othello comes in.)*

*Othello:* Oh, there you are.

*Desdemona:* I'm glad you're here. You said Cassio could see you whenever he wanted, right? So I sent word to him to come.

*Othello:* Oh, hell, not now. I have such a head cold. Lend me your handkerchief, will you.

*Desdemona:* I have this one. (*Offers a handkerchief.*)

*Othello:* Where's the other one — the one I gave you as a present?

*Desdemona:* I can't find it. I don't know what happened to it.

*Othello:* That was a precious heirloom. It was made by a two-hundred-year-old witch. It had magical powers. You can't lose it!

*Desdemona:* I didn't say I lost it. I just can't find it.

*Othello:* Well, go look for it now. I want to see it.

*Desdemona:* Why are you making a big deal about it? You don't want to speak to Cassio. That's it, isn't it?

*Othello:* Find that hanky now!

*Desdemona:* But I wanted to talk to you about Cassio. He's always been such a good—

*Othello:* Fuck Cassio! I want to see that hanky!

*Desdemona:* I don't believe this.

*Othello:* God damn it! (*He leaves angrily.*)

*Emilia:* And he's not the jealous type. Right.

*Desdemona:* I've never seen him like this before. I don't understand.

*Emilia:* Take it from me. It takes a lot longer than you've been married to see all the sides of a man. They chew us up and spit us out....Oh, there's my husband and Cassio.

(*Iago and Cassio come in.*)

*Iago (to Cassio):* Go on. Ask her.

*Cassio:* Madam, I'm begging you. Please. Ask your husband to take me back. I can't bear this waiting.

*Desdemona:* Oh, Cassio, I can't right now. I tried to speak to him, but he's in such a bad mood. Try to be patient.

*Iago:* Oh, is the general angry?

*Emilia:* He was in a foul mood. He just left.

*Iago:* I can't imagine why. But it must be something serious. I'll go talk to him.

*Desdemona:* I wish you would. (*Iago leaves.*) Maybe it was some news from Venice that upset him, or something here in Cyprus. There's probably some reasonable explanation.

*Emilia:* Of course. It's something like that. Some political problem. Nothing to do with you.

*Desdemona:* Of course, not. After all, I've never given him any reason to be jealous.

*Emilia:* Ah, madam....Jealous people don't need a reason. Jealousy just sort of feeds on itself.

*Desdemona:* Well, let's hope that's not what's happening. Cassio, you wait here. I'll try to speak to him for you. Maybe I can bring him back.

*Cassio:* Thanks. I'll wait.

*(Desdemona and Emilia leave. Then Cassio's mistress, Bianca, comes in.)*

*Bianca:* Sweetheart! I've missed you!

*Cassio:* I was on my way to see you, actually.

*Bianca:* And I was on my way to your place. Hey, this girl has been horny without you.

*Cassio:* I'm sorry, babe. I've had things on my mind. But I'll make it up to you. Oh, before I forget....*(Takes out Desdemona's handkerchief.)* You're good with embroidery. Could you make me a copy of this?

*Bianca:* Where did you get this? From some other girl, I suppose. That's why I haven't seen you for over a week.

*Cassio:* No, no, I swear! How could you ever think such a thing?

*Bianca:* Whose is it, then?

*Cassio:* I don't know. I just found it in my room. It's awfully nice. But I can't keep it, because somebody will be wanting it back. I thought you'd make a copy for me before I have to return it. So why don't you just take it with you and go, okay?

*Bianca:* You want me to go?

*Cassio:* You can't stay here. I'm waiting for the general. I don't want him to see me with you.

*Bianca:* Oh, so you don't love me.

*Cassio:* Of course, I do.

*Bianca:* Then promise you'll see me soon.

*Cassio:* Yes, I promise.

*Bianca:* At least walk me to the corner like a good boyfriend.

*Cassio:* Okay, but only to the corner. I have to be here when the general shows up.

*Bianca:* I have some crotchless panties to wear for you.

*Cassio:* Great. Fine. Whatever.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 4, Scene 1.** *Othello and Iago are in front of the castle.*

*Othello:* So that bastard Cassio had my handkerchief, did he? That's bad.

*Iago:* What if I told you he talked about fucking your wife?

*Othello:* Are you shitting me?

*Iago:* No. But, of course, he'll deny it.

*Othello:* I can't take this!...I...I feel...faint...*(He faints. Just then, Cassio comes in.)*

*Cassio:* What happened to the general?

*Iago:* He's had a seizure. Don't worry. He'll come out of it. Listen, maybe you shouldn't be here when he wakes up. I'll get him on his way, and you come back in a few minutes.

*Cassio:* Okay, if you think that's best. *(Cassio leaves.)*

*Othello (Waking up):* Cassio...Cassio....He told you he fucked my wife?

*Iago:* Take it easy, General. Cassio was just here, but I got rid of him. Listen, he's coming back in a couple of minutes. This is what we'll do. You'll hide and listen in on our conversation. I'll get him to tell me about your wife. Just don't do anything for now, okay? Just hold your temper.

*Othello:* All right, I will. But later he's a dead man.

*Iago:* Whatever you say. Now just go and hide. *(Othello leaves.)* Excellent. When Cassio comes back, I'll get him to talk about that whore girlfriend of his, Bianca, and Othello will think he's talking about Desdemona. *(Cassio returns.)* Ah, Lieutenant. You're back.

*Cassio:* Lieutenant. Huh, I wish. If only I could get my job back.

*Iago (In a low voice):* Keep leaning on Desdemona, and you'll get your wish. Of course, if it were in Bianca's hands, you'd get your old job back like that *(Snaps fingers)*.

*Cassio:* Ha! She'd really do a job on the general!

*Othello (From concealment):* Laughing at me, is he?

*Iago (Back to normal voice):* I never knew a woman who loved a man as much as she loves you.

*Cassio:* Yeah, I think she really does love me.

*Iago:* She's told some people that you're going to marry her. Are you?

*Cassio:* Are you kidding? That's a laugh! Oh, I like her well enough, but it's just for sport. I never promised her anything. She was here a little while ago. She follows me around like a puppy. I was on the beach with some guys from Venice, and that hot little pussy comes along and throws her arms around me. What an embarrassment! I ought to dump that whore, except that she's such a good fuck.

*(Bianca comes in.)*

*Iago:* Speaking of which.

*Cassio:* Are you back again?

*Bianca:* Oh, fuck off. What was the big idea of giving me that handkerchief? You say you want me to copy it. Some nerve! You expect me to believe that you just happened to find it in your room, and you have no idea whose it is! Here! Take it back. I'm not making a copy. Give it back to your....girlfriend!

*Cassio:* Aw, come on, Bianca, sweetie-pie, honey-bun. baby-doll. Don't be like that.

*Othello:* Fuck me. That looks like my handkerchief.

*Bianca:* If you don't show up for dinner tonight, don't bother coming over ever again! *(She leaves.)*

*Iago:* Go after her.

*Cassio:* Yeah, guess I'd better, or she'll be cursing me out loud on the street for everyone to hear.

*Iago:* Are you going to her place for dinner?

*Cassio:* Yeah, I suppose so.

*Iago:* Well, I might pass by and have a word with you.

*Cassio:* Okay, then. Later. *(He leaves. Then Othello comes out of hiding.)*

*Othello:* That was my handkerchief, wasn't it?

*Iago:* Yup. You saw it.

*Othello:* What's the best way for me to murder that asshole?

*Iago:* I know what you mean. You see what he really thinks of your wife? She gives him that lovely hanky, which was your present, and he gives it to that ho, Bianca.

*Othello:* What an insult to my wife!

*Iago:* Forget her.

*Othello:* You're right. Let her rot in hell. And I thought she was the most wonderful woman in the world. I believed in her. That makes it a thousand times harder to take this shit. But to take revenge on her....I so much hate to do it, Iago.

*Iago:* Well, if you don't mind her fucking other men, tell her she can. Otherwise—

*Othello:* Oh, god damn it! I'll tear her to pieces! No, I'll use poison. Iago, can you get me some poison?

*Iago:* Don't use poison. Strangle her. It's more direct. It's more honorable.

*Othello:* Yes....Yes....

*Iago:* As for Cassio, leave him to me. I'll do it tonight.

*Othello:* Good. (*A trumpet is heard.*) What trumpet is that?

*Iago:* That's from Venice, if I'm not mistaken.

(*Lodovico, Desdemona, and attendants come in.*)

*Lodovico:* Hey, how's it going, guys? You have regards from the Duke and all the senators. And, General, here's a letter for you. (*Othello opens the letter and begins reading.*) How's Lieutenant Cassio?

*Iago:* He's alive.

*Desdemona:* Cousin, I'm afraid there's been a bit of a falling out between Cassio and my husband. Maybe you can patch it up.

*Othello:* Don't count on it.

*Desdemona:* Oh?

*Othello (Reading):* "You are hereby instructed to..." (*Mumbles.*)

*Lodovico:* This is news to me. What's wrong?

*Desdemona:* It's an unhappy situation. I've been trying to fix it for poor Cassio. I care for the guy.

*Othello (Mumbles, finishes letter):* Goddamn fucking hell!

*Desdemona:* Uh, oh.

*Lodovico:* I think he's being recalled to Venice, and Cassio will be left in command here.

*Desdemona:* Oh, that's such a relief!

*Othello:* Is it now?

*Desdemona:* What do you mean?

*Othello:* Bitch! (*He slaps her. Desdemona cries.*)

*Lodovico:* General! I can't believe what I just saw! Tell you you're sorry. She's crying.

*Othello:* Don't pay any attention to her phony tears. (*To Desdemona*) Get out of my sight! (*Desdemona leaves crying.*)

*Lodovico:* Oh, General! This is cruel!

*Othello:* Forget her. As for this (*Indicates letter*), they want me back in Venice. Cassio is to be in command here. Shit. But orders and orders. You'll have dinner at my place tonight, Lodovico. Welcome to Cyprus — island of goats and monkeys. (*Othello leaves angrily.*)

*Lodovico:* What the fuck? This is our great commander? This is the pride of Venice?



*Iago:* He's changed.

*Lodovico:* He must be out of his mind. Did you see how he hit his wife — my cousin?

*Iago:* I think there's worse to come.

*Lodovico:* What's his problem? Is he overworked? Or did the letter piss him off?

*Iago:* I'm afraid I can't tell you everything I know. That would be indiscreet for an officer. But just watch him and judge for yourself.

*Lodovico:* This is a shock to me.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 4, Scene 2.** *Within the castle. Othello and Emilia come in.*

*Othello:* You're supposed to be my wife's companion. Surely you've seen something going on between her and Cassio.

*Emilia:* No. Absolutely nothing.

*Othello:* She never asked you to leave so they could be alone?

*Emilia:* Never. They've always been totally proper. If you think something's going on, then somebody has been feeding you lies.

*Othello:* Tell her I want to see her. *(Emilia leaves.)* Emilia's covering up for her. Gotta be. She's probably been helping them all along. *(Desdemona and Emilia come in. To Emilia)* Okay, leave us. *(Emilia leaves.)* I want to hear you swear to God you've been faithful to me.

*Desdemona:* Of course, I have.

*Othello:* Don't bullshit me, you liar! I could've taken any other sort of misery but this.

*Desdemona:* What the hell have I done?

*Othello:* You're a whore!

*Desdemona:* I'm no such thing!

*Othello:* The clever whore of Venice who married Othello. What Saint Peter is to heaven, you are to hell — the doorkeeper! *(Emilia comes in.)* And you keep your mouth shut about all this, Emilia! *(Othello leaves.)*

*Emilia:* What's the matter with him?

*Desdemona:* I have no husband any more. I'm just totally numb. I need to speak to Iago.

*(Emilia leaves and returns with Iago.)*

*Iago:* How are you, madam?

*Desdemona:* Iago, am I a whore?

*Emilia:* The general called her a whore.

*Iago:* No! Why would he say that?

*Desdemona:* I have no idea.

*Iago:* What a jerk! What started all this?

*Desdemona:* God only knows.

*Emilia:* Some fucking asshole has been spreading lies. Somebody who's out to get something for himself. That's what I think.

*Iago:* That's incredible! No one could be that evil.

*Emilia:* Whoever he is, he deserves to hang! Calling her a whore. When? With who? Whoever that bastard is deserves to be skinned alive! He should have his balls cut off!

*Iago:* Please, not so loud.

*Emilia:* I don't give a fuck if I'm loud! Imagine if some lying piece of shit turned your brain inside out and made you think I was fucking the general!

*Iago:* Quiet! Don't be stupid!

*Desdemona:* Iago, you've got to help me get him back. Please! You're my friend. Go talk to him. I still love him, even after what he said.

*Iago:* Yes, yes, it'll be all right. Don't be upset. It's just a passing mood. The pressure of the job. State business. That sort of thing. *(Trumpets are heard.)* That's the call to dinner. The general's having the VIP's from Venice as his guests. You don't want them to see you crying.

*(Desdemona and Emilia leave. Then Roderigo comes in.)*

*Iago:* Wassup, man?

*Roderigo:* I'm getting fed up with you blowing me off day after day. You told me I'd get Desdemona back, and what have you done for me? Nothing. I'm not taking this shit any more.

*Iago:* Roddy, I promised you—

*Roderigo:* Fuck your promises! You told me to send her presents, and I spent all my money on jewelry, which you said you delivered. And you said she was happy to get it. And so?

*Iago:* Yeah, and so?

*Roderigo:* Well, I think you've been jerking me around, and I don't like it!

*Iago:* Fine. Whatever.

*Roderigo:* Well, I'll just go straight to Desdemona myself. If she wants to give me back my presents, I'll forget the whole business and not bother her any more. If she doesn't give them back, I'll take it out on you!

*Iago:* That's the spirit! You know, from now on I like you even better. I don't blame you for being pissed off with me. But the fact is, I've been taking care of things for you.

*Roderigo:* It sure doesn't look that way to me.

*Iago:* I know. Maybe it doesn't look that way. But listen. Roddy. Dude. If you're the man I think you are — and I mean a man with balls — you're going to get your chance to prove it tonight. And if you don't have Desdemona in your arms by tomorrow night, you can cut my heart out with a knife, if you want to. You can throw me off a cliff. You can set wild dogs on me. You can force me to read Canadian poetry magazines.

*Roderigo:* All right, all right. What's your plan?

*Iago:* In a minute. But first I've got some news that affects you. Some officials are here from Venice. They're going to install Cassio in command here in Cyprus.

*Roderigo:* So, then, Othello and Desdemona are going back to Venice?

*Iago:* Not quite. He's being reassigned to Mauritania. She'll be going with him, of course.

*Roderigo:* Mauritania? Fucking Mauritania? Are you shitting me? Holy fuck! I'll never see her again!

*Iago:* That's right. Unless...something happens that prevents him from leaving Cyprus. Like, for instance, if Cassio were to have a, uh...somewhat fatal accident.

*Roderigo:* A fatal accident. And I'm going to be the fatal accident. Is that it?

*Iago:* Exactly. Cassio will be at his girlfriend's place for dinner tonight. He'll be leaving her place probably between midnight and one o'clock. You lie in wait for him and then...you know...do what you have to do. I'll be there, too, to back you up, if necessary. Come one. Let's walk.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 4, Scene 3.** *Another room in the castle. Othello, Lodovico, Desdemona, Emilia, and attendants come in.*

*Othello:* Desi, I'm going to walk with Lodovico a bit. You get to bed. I'll be back in a little while.  
*(Othello, Lodovico, and attendants leave.)*

*Emilia:* I've laid out your night things. And I put your wedding sheets on your bed, as you asked.

*Desdemona:* If I die tonight, wrap me in one of them.

*Emilia:* Oh, don't say that!

*(Emilia and Desdemona leave.)*

**Act 5. Scene 1.** *A street at night. Iago and Roderigo come in.*

*Iago:* You hide in this recess. He'll be coming this way. Make sure you shove the sword in good. I'll be nearby.

*Roderigo:* Stay close in case I miss.

*Iago:* Two steps away, bro. Now get focused and just do it. *(Iago goes a short distance away and conceals himself.)*

*Roderigo (Aside):* I don't know if I'm really up for this. But after what he told me, I don't have any choice.

*Iago (Aside):* If this works out the way I hope, they both end up dead. I need them both out of the way.  
*(Cassio comes by.)*

*Roderigo:* Die, you bastard! *(Makes a pass at Cassio.)*

*Cassio:* What the fuck! *(Draws his sword and strikes Roderigo.)* Take that, you fucker!

*Roderigo:* Oh, shit!

*(Iago sneaks behind Cassio, stabs him in the leg, and leaves.)*

*Cassio:* Oh, my leg! Oh, fuck! Help! *(Falls. At this point, Othello enters at one side of the stage, barely seen.)*

*Othello (Aside):* That's Cassio's voice. Iago got him. So much for your boyfriend, Desdemona. Now you're next. *(Othello leaves. Then Lodovico and Gratiano come in.)*

*Cassio:* Help me! Somebody!

*Gratiano:* Somebody's in trouble!

*Cassio:* Help!

*Roderigo:* That bastard!

*Lodovico:* That's two different voices. Hold on. It could be a trick. We need some other people.

*Roderigo:* I'm bleeding to death!

*Gratiano:* Somebody's coming with a lamp. He's armed.

*(Iago comes in.)*

*Iago:* Who's there? Who called for help?

*Lodovico:* We don't know.

*Cassio:* Over here! Help me!

*Gratiano:* Isn't that Iago, the general's ancient?

*Lodovico:* Why, yes.

*Cassio:* Iago! It's me! I was attacked!

*Iago:* Cassio! My God! Who did this?

*Cassio:* One of them is still here. I wounded him.

*Roderigo:* Help me here! I'm hurt!

*Cassio:* That's the guy!

*Iago:* I'll get that rat! *(He stabs Roderigo.)*

*Roderigo (Faintly):* Iago...you...bastard...*(Falls unconscious, apparently dead.)*

*Iago:* Where are the others? Where is everybody? Isn't there anyone on the street? Hey, who are you guys?

*Lodovico:* It's me. Lodovico. And Gratiano, Desdemona's uncle.

*Iago:* Help me with Cassio. He's my friend.—Bro, how are you?

*Cassio:* My leg is cut. I'm bleeding all over the place.

*Iago:* Hold on. Guys, give me some light. I'll tie my shirt around him to stop the bleeding.

*(Bianca comes in.)*

*Bianca:* What happened? I heard somebody scream.

*Iago:* Yeah, you should know, you bitch.

*Bianca:* Cassio! Cassio! My darling!

*Iago:* Fuckin ho.—Cassio, who did this to you?

*Cassio:* I don't know.

*Iago:* We need some kind of stretcher.

*Bianca:* Cassio! Cassio!

*Iago:* Guys, I think this bitch had something to do with it. She's a ho.—Take it easy, Cassio.—Guys, put the light on this other guy....Who is it?...Holy shit! It's Roderigo! He's a friend of mine! *(Neighbors bring a chair in.)* That'll do. Get Cassio indoors. I'll get the general's doctor. *(To Bianca)* As for you, bitch, what did you have to do with this?

*Cassio:* She didn't have anything to do with it. And I don't know that other guy.

*(Cassio and Roderigo are carried off by neighbors.)*

*Iago:* Look at this bitch. She's got guilt written all over her face.

*(Emilia comes in.)*

*Emilia:* What's going on here?

*Iago:* Cassio was attacked by a Venetian named Roderigo, and some other guys. He's hurt bad, but he killed Roderigo.

*Emilia:* Oh, my God! Poor Cassio!

*Iago:* This is what happens to men who patronize hos. Ask him where he had dinner tonight.

*Bianca:* He had dinner at my house. So what?

*Iago:* So you're coming with me, that's what.—Emilia, run back to the castle and tell the general and his wife what's happened.—Guys, let's make sure Cassio's being taken care of. (*All leave, except Iago, who lingers for a moment. Aside*) This is where all the shit hits the fan. Either I'm rolling in clover, or fucked ten times over. (*He leaves.*)

**Act 5, Scene 2.** *Desdemona is sleeping in her bed when Othello comes in with a lamp.*

*Othello:* How I hate to kill her. I could extinguish this lamp and relight it if I wanted to. But if I extinguish her life, I can't bring her back. (*He kisses her.*) One last kiss. This is how I would remember you.

(*Desdemona awakens.*)

*Desdemona:* Othello?

*Othello:* Yes.

*Desdemona:* Are you coming to bed?

*Othello:* Have you said your prayers?

*Desdemona:* Yes.

*Othello:* Do you have anything to confess to God? I don't want to kill you if you haven't confessed yourself.

*Desdemona:* Kill me?

*Othello:* Yes.

*Desdemona:* What have I done? What am I supposed to confess?

*Othello:* Remember that handkerchief I gave you as a gift? You gave it to Cassio.

*Desdemona:* I never did. You can ask him.

*Othello:* Don't lie to me. I saw it in his hand.

*Desdemona:* Then he must have found it. But I never gave it to him. Ask him.

*Othello:* He's already confessed.

*Desdemona:* Confessed to what?

*Othello:* To having had sex with you.

*Desdemona:* That's impossible! He would never say that!

*Othello:* Oh, he won't admit it now. But Iago heard him say it.

*Desdemona:* No! Iago's lying! Don't kill me! Let me live!

*(Othello strangles her. Emilia bangs on the door.)*

*Emilia (From outside):* My lord! My lord!

*Othello:* Who's there?

*Emilia:* Please, my lord! I must speak to you!

*Othello (Aside):* Emilia. She's going to tell me that Cassio is dead. Should I let her in? My wife is still breathing.

*Emilia:* Please, my lord! It's urgent!

*Othello:* Wait till I draw the curtains. *(Draws the bedcurtains, then opens the door to let Emilia in.)*

*Emilia:* Oh, my lord! Someone's been killed!

*Othello:* There must be a full moon. Everyone's gone crazy.

*Emilia:* My lord, Cassio has killed a Venetian named Roderigo!

*Othello:* Killed him? And what about Cassio? Is he dead?

*Emilia:* No, he's alive.

*Othello:* Alive? I must have my revenge.

*Desdemona:* He's killing me! I'm innocent!

*Emilia (Parts the bedcurtains):* My God! Desdemona!

*Desdemona (Faintly):* I'm dying....I'm innocent.

*Emilia:* Who did this to you?

*Desdemona:* No one....myself....Goodbye. *(Dies.)*

*Othello:* Even in death she lies. I killed her.

*Emilia:* You killed her? You monster!

*Othello:* It was a matter of honor. She was a slut. A whore.

*Emilia:* No! She was always faithful to you!

*Othello:* She was having an affair with Cassio. Ask your husband. He knew all about it.

*Emilia:* My husband?

*Othello:* Yes. He told me. He wouldn't lie.

*Emilia:* My husband told you? If he said that, he deserves to rot in hell! But he didn't! That's just your excuse for murdering your wife!

*Othello:* Shut up! You don't know the truth!

*Emilia:* You fool! I'm going to tell everyone what you've done!—Help! Help! The general has killed his wife! Murder! Murder!

*(Montano, Gratiano, Iago, and others rush in.)*

*Montano:* What's going on, General?

*Emilia:* Iago! Now you're being blamed for murder!

*Gratiano:* What? Murder?

*Emilia:* Tell us he's lying Iago. He claims you told him Desdemona was having an affair with Cassio. I know you would never say such a thing.

*Iago:* I only told him what I thought, and he found the proof he needed.

*Emilia:* Did you actually say she was having an affair with Cassio?

*Iago:* Yes.

*Emilia:* You liar! Having an affair with Cassio? Cassio?

*Iago:* Hold your tongue.

*Emilia:* Don't tell me to hold my tongue! My lady lies murdered in her own bed!

*Others:* Oh! Oh, no!

*Othello:* I had to kill her. She dishonored me.

*Emilia:* You murderer!

*Iago:* Shut up! Go to your room!

*Emilia:* No!

*Gratiano:* Poor Desdemona! I'm glad your father's not alive to see this.

*Othello:* You people don't understand. She was unfaithful. Iago knows. Cassio even admitted it. She gave Cassio that handkerchief I gave her as a gift.

*Emilia:* The handkerchief! Oh, my God! Now I understand!

*Iago:* Shut up!

*Emilia:* No, I won't shut up!

*(Iago threatens Emilia with his sword.)*



*Gratiano:* Don't you dare!

*Emilia (to Othello):* You fool! I found that handkerchief! I gave it to my husband because he kept begging me to steal it. I couldn't understand why he would want it. Now I do. I see it all now.

*Iago:* Fucking bitch! Liar!

*Emilia:* It's the truth! And now Desdemona is dead! Murdered by mistake! Because you lied!

*Othello:* You bastard!

*(Othello goes after Iago with a knife but is disarmed and held back by Montano and others. Iago stabs his wife and flees.)*

*Montano:* You guys guard the door! The Moor doesn't leave this room! I'll go after Iago.

*(All leave the room, except Othello and Emilia, who is lying on the floor.)*

*Emilia (Dying):* She loved you, Moor. She was true to you. *(Dies.)*

*Othello:* This is the end. My life is over....I have another sword here somewhere....Yes, here it is. Now let me be damned to hell. Oh, Desdemona!

*(Lodovico, Cassio, Montano, and officers return with Iago in custody.)*

*Lodovico:* Where is that murderer?

*Othello:* I'm looking at him. *(Wounds Iago. Others disarm Othello.)*

*Iago:* I'm not dead.

*Othello:* You'll wish you were.

*Lodovico:* Othello, you were once so good. Now see what you've turned into — all because you let yourself get played by this miserable piece of shit. How are you going to be remembered?

*Othello:* As an honorable murderer, if there is such a thing. I did it for the sake of honor.

*Lodovico:* This bastard admitted trying to kill Cassio. Were you in on it?

*Othello:* Yes.

*Cassio:* I never gave you any reason.

*Othello:* I know that now. I'm sorry. Ask this bastard why he did all this.

*Iago:* I have nothing to say to any of you.

*Lodovico:* General, we found a couple of letters in Roderigo's pocket. In one of them he admits to taking part in a plan to kill Cassio. And there was another letter intended for Iago, which was never delivered. He was very angry with Iago for deceiving him.

*Othello:* Cassio, how did you come to have my wife's handkerchief?

*Cassio:* I found it in my room. Iago admitted he put it there to set me up.

*Othello:* Oh, God! What have I done! How could I be such a fool!

*Cassio:* The last thing Roderigo said before he died was that Iago was to blame for the attack on me. Iago used him. Iago made him do everything.

*Lodovico:* General, you're under arrest. You are stripped of your rank, and Cassio shall assume your command. Iago can expect the worst possible punishment. Your fate will be decided by the state of Venice. Let's go.

*Othello:* Wait. Let me speak. When you record these events in your letters, tell the truth about me — nothing better and nothing worse. Remember me as one whose love was greater than his wisdom. You can say that I was manipulated and deceived by someone I trusted, and that I threw away the greatest treasure of my life — by mistake. And you can say that once, long ago, in Syria, when a Turkish bastard insulted the honor of Venice, I grabbed his throat and killed him...like...this! (*Stabs himself.*)

*Lodovico:* Oh, God!

*Othello:* I kissed you before I killed you, Desdemona. This is the only way for me to die. (*He falls across Desdemona's body and dies.*)

*Lodovico:* Remove this bed from this room and hide it away forever. Gratiano, everything the Moor owned is now yours — his house, his wealth, everything. As Desdemona's uncle, his estate reverts to you. (*To Montano*) And you, Lord Governor, shall have the privilege of passing judgment on this despicable scumbag, Iago. Any torture you care to impose. And don't be squeamish about it. As for myself, I'm taking the next ship back to Venice. I'll have to tell the Duke and the senators everything that's happened here — all these terrible events — although it will break my heart to tell it.

(*All leave.*)

**END**

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